



Formal Composition (Grade 12)

Course Description:

The curriculum for this course is developed from the [Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts](#). An advanced one-semester elective writing course emphasizing the development of various types of essays and research papers. Highly recommended for the college-bound students. Topics covered include thesis sentence development, note taking and documentation, outlining, types of research essays, and term papers.

Essential Understandings:

1. Understanding of new vocabulary words can be developed through phonetic and structural clues, context usage, and dictionary use. (L.11-12.4)
2. Complex sentence structures and varied sentence types enhance written communication. (W.11-12.1.C)
3. Examining texts and other visuals for such things as bias, propaganda and fallacies in logic strengthens a writer's rhetoric and credibility. (RI.11-12.6)
4. Interpretation and critical thinking broaden and deepen the understanding of what is read. (RI.11-12.10)
5. Writers use a variety of literary devices and stylistic techniques to influence and entertain the reader. (RI.11-12.6)
6. Developing a thesis using a variety of techniques and valid reasoning strengthens a writer's argument. (W.11-12.1)
7. The process of writing is used in different ways to communicate ideas with different audiences for a variety of reasons. (W.11-12.5)
8. Careful analysis, evaluation and synthesis of source material used in research allows writers to combine ideas while avoiding plagiarism. (W.11-12.8)
9. Formal style and objective tone in writing enhance a writer's argument and credibility. (W.11-12.2.E)

Unit	Description of Unit and Learning Targets
Logic and Persuasion • What is critical thinking and how is it used in writing? • How does a writer use tone to advance an opinion? • What makes writing persuasive? • How does one construct a persuasive argument? • What makes writing logical? • What can cause logical flaws? • How can I elevate my language with increasingly sophisticated diction and syntax?	Introduction to college-level thinking and writing: Writing a "Why" essay. Students learn terminology related to critical thinking, argument, and academic writing; subsequently, students write an argument on an ethical problem of their choosing -- the "Why" essay. <u>Learning Targets:</u> • I can establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which I am writing. • I can write an argument to support claims creates an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. • I can select precise language and domain specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the text. • I can identify key ideas and details which provide evidence to support conclusions about a text. • I can explain how the themes or central ideas interact and build on one another to produce a complex text.
Close Analysis in Reading and Writing • How is critical analysis used in writing?	Close Analysis and Writing the "How" Essay. Students gain understanding of the critical thinking skill of analysis, then apply by writing an analysis of a function, a process, or a cause and effect sequence.

• How is writing analyzed? • How do writers and artists organize or construct text to convey meaning?	<u>Learning Targets:</u> • I can analyze how the author's structural choices contribute to the structure, meaning and aesthetic impact. • I can apply knowledge of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading. • I can select precise language and domain specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the text. • I can identify key ideas and details which provide evidence to support conclusions about a text.
Research • How is research analyzed into "steps"? • What makes some research sources more credible and reliable than others? • How can I use current ways to search for sources? • What are the essential elements of effective informative writing? • Why is academic research relevant to me?	Researching and using sources and writing the "What" essay. Students review or learn research skills and apply to academic writing. <u>Learning Targets:</u> • I can identify multiple credible sources on a subject of research. • I can conduct short and sustained research to answer a question or solve a problem. • I can identify key ideas and details which provide evidence to support conclusions about the text accessed through research.
The Extended Research Paper • What is an academic research question, and how is it used by scholars to drive research? • Why is it important to ask big questions and search for answers? • How do we synthesize multiple resources into a cohesive argument?	Students gain understanding of longform academic writing, purpose and style. The culminating research paper is a synthesis of researched material, analysis, and argument. <u>Learning Targets:</u> • I can demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing. • I can identify multiple credible sources on a subject of research. • I can conduct short and sustained research to answer a question or solve a problem. • I can identify key ideas and details which provide evidence to support conclusions about the text accessed through research.